United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ General Assembly, beginning forty-eighth session, elects Samuel R. Insanally (Guyana) as President; opening address stresses importance of Secretary-General's "An Agenda for Peace", UNCED's Agenda 21 and financial plight of United Nations.

+ Parties to conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina conclude Agreement on revised peace package; President Alija Izetbegovic to present package to Bosnian Assembly before signing can take place.

+ Secretary-General, marking International Day of Peace, says that while for many people peace may seem impossible, hope existed now in Middle East, El Salvador and Cambodia.

+ Advisor and financier to General Aideed among four Somalis detained by United States Quick Reaction Force; three Pakistani UNOSOM II peace-keepers killed, seven wounded, in Mogadishu ambush.

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The General Assembly began its forty-eighth session today by electing Samuel R. Insanally (Guyana) to the Presidency by acclamation. In his opening address, President Insanally said violent explosions in the wake of the ending of the cold war had given rise to doubts as to whether the goals of peace and prosperity would be achieved. However, the United Nations had been strengthened by the entry in the last year of many newly independent States as Members, including Andorra, the Czech Republic, Eritrea, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Monaco and the Slovak Republic.

Mr. Insanally said he was encouraged by the new momentum towards peace in the Middle East following the signing of the Israel/Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Accord, and by the progress towards universal suffrage in South Africa. The problems of Afghanistan, Cambodia, El Salvador and Haiti had also yielded to diplomacy and negotiation. Meanwhile, civil strife and violence persisted in Somalia and in the former Yugoslavia, where "ethnic

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cleansing" -- an unacceptable euphemism for genocide and the acquisition of territory by force -- was on the rampage. The United Nations had to find answers to those problems in order to avoid future misfortune.

In a world so divided by conflict, peace-keeping and peace-building were obvious priorities, Mr. Insanally stressed, citing the Secretary-General's report "An Agenda for Peace". It made sense to devise a reliable system for financing United Nations peace operations. Peace also required development and international economic cooperation, he said and appealed to all States to cooperate in the implementation of "Agenda 21", the programme of action adopted at last year's United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Recalling the Secretary-General's recent warning that the United Nations was on the verge of bankruptcy, the new President urged that the Organization be provided with sufficient human and financial resources to carry out its mission.

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The parties to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina have concluded an Agreement on a revised peace package, but have not yet signed it, as Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic first has to present the package to his Assembly, according to a United Nations spokesman. He said Thorvald Stoltenberg, Co-Chairman of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, had said the Agreement indicated a "striking and important" dedication to achieving results.

The Agreement, which is to enter into force one week after being acted on by the Security Council, provides for a complete cessation of all hostilities and a withdrawal of forces. It confirms that the Union of Republics of Bosnia and Herzegovina will continue as a Member of the United Nations and contains an understanding that the Council will authorize a phased lifting of sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). The Agreement also gives the "Muslim majority Republic" access to the Adriatic Sea through the Port of Ploce.

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While the threat of nuclear war had receded, for many peoples around the world peace seemed an impossible dream, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said this morning in a statement marking the International Day of Peace. But, he continued, there were signs that peace was possible.

The United Nations mission was to make the dream of peace come true. For all the suffering and the setbacks, there had been successes, he continued. "There is hope today in the Middle East, where before there seemed to be no hope. There is hope as well in El Salvador and Cambodia," he said. "I am convinced that the list will grow longer to include Liberia, Somalia, South Africa, Central Asia and elsewhere."

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The United States Quick Reaction Force today detained four Somali men in Mogadishu, one of whom was identified as Osman Ato, a principal advisor and financier of General Mohamed Farah Aideed and his militia. One detainee was slightly wounded and some militia men may have been killed in the operation, according to a United Nations spokesman.

Meanwhile, a patrol of Pakistani peace-keepers serving with the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) was ambushed in the city today, the spokesman said. Three soldiers were killed and seven were wounded when their armoured personnel carrier was fired on. Some 100 Pakistani soldiers later secured the area where the ambush took place.

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